

March 21, 2005

TO: Washington State Law Enforcement Agencies

FROM: Lowell Porter, Director
(360) 753-4018, lporter@wtsc.wa.gov

RE: Electronic Traffic Information Processing (eTRIP)

This letter is to update law enforcement about an ongoing effort to utilize new computer and information technology to improve traffic-related information in Washington. Federal, state, and local public safety organizations have come together to form a statewide partnership aimed at providing decision-makers access to more timely, accurate, and reliable information. The Washington Traffic Safety Commission is committed to the success of this coalition and its mission to improve the quality of our state's traffic data.

Changes within the public safety and law enforcement profession occur at a rapid pace as new computer and communications products are introduced. Technology is a proven tool in realizing substantial efficiencies in our day-to-day business, allowing us more time to focus on our core responsibilities. These innovations are a great opportunity, but can also be a burden when deciding which technologies can provide us the greatest return on investment. This has become especially relevant as those to whom we are accountable call for increased performance without comparable increases in resources.

The question of technology and its future impact for the public safety and the law enforcement community has been a major issue for the Washington Traffic Records Committee (TRC). This group serves as a state and local stakeholder forum with representatives from the transportation, law enforcement, criminal justice, and health professions who are focused on developing strategies for improving the collection, dissemination, and use of traffic-related information.

The TRC is currently finalizing Washington's Traffic Records Strategic Plan, a blueprint outlining the future vision for the state's traffic records system. The centerpiece of the strategic plan is the Electronic Traffic Information Processing (eTRIP) initiative, a multi-agency effort to reduce the inefficiencies of our state's current paper-based process of collecting and exchanging citation and collision data and other traffic information. The eTRIP initiative specifically seeks to accomplish three primary objectives:

1. Support efforts to provide law enforcement officers efficient methods to electronically capture ticket data, collision report data and other data in the field

2. Develop a statewide data exchange network to allow this information to be transmitted electronically to users.
3. Prepare agency systems and repositories to receive electronic traffic data.

The eTRIP initiative is a collaborative effort among various state and local agencies to create a seamless and integrated system for information travel from the point of origin to its end use and analysis. Consistent stakeholder input has ensured an open and standards-based approach, providing an environment for local agencies to pursue IT projects while maintaining compatibility with state systems.

One of the primary projects within the eTRIP initiative is the acquisition of a software application to enable officers to issue citations and complete collision reports electronically. This software will be compatible with a variety of in-field hardware devices and will be available without licensing fees to agencies seeking to implement in-field data computing solutions.

While a substantial amount of work is being devoted to the development of an electronic system, the driving forces of this endeavor recognize the diversity in size and make up of law enforcement agencies in Washington. Accordingly, the state is committed to supporting the current paper-based processes until such legacy systems no longer meet agency needs.

The arrival of new technology often signals change, but this change also provides a significant advantage in our day-to-day efforts to increase public safety and carry out quality enforcement. The eTRIP initiative seeks to provide each of us with improved tools to accomplish our daily tasks and fulfill our agency goals. Please see the attached executive summary for further details about the eTRIP initiative and the data collection software project. The Washington State Patrol has also developed a website to facilitate communication to various stakeholders. Please visit the website for more information: <http://www.wsp.wa.gov/etrip/etrip.htm>.

Thank you for your support and interest in this important project. If you have questions, please contact Chris Madill, Traffic Records Coordinator with the Traffic Safety Commission at (360) 586-7104 or cmadill@sharedx.wa.gov.